

# DELAWARE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

## Meeting Minutes DRAFT

May 21, 2020  
Virtual Meeting  
5:00pm

*On March 12, 2020, Governor Carney issued a declaration of a state of emergency for the state of Delaware due to a public health threat. The State of Emergency allows all public meetings of executive branch public bodies, including the State Board of Education, to be conducted electronically, either by means of telephone conference call or video-conference call.*

**Members Present:** Nina Lou Bunting; Vincent Lofink; Audrey Noble; Dorcas Olatunji; Provey Powell, Jr.; Wali Rushdan II; Whitney Sweeney.

**Members Absent:** Candice Fifer

**Others Present:** Susan Bunting, State Board of Education (SBE) Executive Secretary and the Secretary of Education, Delaware Department of Education (DDOE); Jenna Ahner, SBE Executive Director; Kathleen Smith, SBE Administrative Assistant; Carla Jarosz, Delaware Department of Justice (DDOJ); Darryl Parson, DDOJ; Linnea Bradshaw, Professional Standards Board (PSB); Chuck Longfellow, DDOE; Leroy Travers, DDOE; Ted Molin, Wilmington Trust; Rebecca Vitelli, State Teacher of the Year; members of the public.

### I. Opening

#### A. Call to Order:

Ms. Sweeney called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Ms. Sweeney shared that on March 12, 2020, Governor Carney issued a declaration of a state of emergency for the state of Delaware due to a public health threat. The State of Emergency allows all public meetings of executive branch public bodies, including the State Board of Education, to be conducted electronically, either by means of telephone conference call or video-conference call.

Ms. Sweeney announced the guidelines for conducting the electronic meeting. She shared information on how public comment would be conducted later in the meeting.

#### B. Roll Call of State Board Members

Ms. Smith conducted roll call for the meeting with seven members present (Bunting, Lofink, Noble, Olatunji, Powell, Rushdan, and Sweeney).

#### C. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Sweeney noted that the agenda was posted on May 14, 2020.

A motion was made by Mr. Lofink and seconded by Ms. Bunting to approve the May 21, 2020 agenda as presented. The motion carried (6 Yes to 0 No - Yes: Bunting, Lofink, Noble, Powell, Rushdan, and Sweeney).

D. Approval of April 23, 2020 Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Bunting and seconded by Mr. Lofink to approve the April 23, 2020 minutes as presented. The motion carried (6 Yes to 0 No – Yes: Bunting, Lofink, Noble, Powell, Rushdan, and Sweeney).

## **II. Secretary's Report**

Dr. Susan Bunting provided her report, details of which have been posted online. She reported that the DDOE Leadership Cabinet is meeting weekly with districts, seeking successful practices to share and ways to provide further support for remote learning plans. She highlighted the progress toward distributing CARES Act and the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds, as well as the work of the three groups planning for the re-opening of our schools – the Health and Wellness, Academics and Equity, and the Operations and Services groups.

Board members asked questions regarding ways that schools might take on a broader role in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, how the work of the three groups will be communicated among the groups themselves, whether DDOE will establish parameters for program consistency across the state, whether DDOE has metrics to measure which students are not engaged in remote learning, and if there were any emerging trends in districts' approaches to alternative graduation ceremonies. The Board inquired about the timeline for distribution, guidelines and accountability for spending ESSER funding and whether any districts are planning to provide targeted supplemental instruction over the summer to address unfinished learning.

## **III. Presentations**

A. Delaware State Teacher of the Year – Rebecca Vitelli

The Board recognized Ms. Vitelli, teacher of pre-kindergarten for the Colonial Early Education Program, for her outstanding contributions toward the growth and betterment of the students served through Delaware public education.

Ms. Vitelli spoke of the value of establishing connections with students and their families, celebrating small successes, and inspiring a love of learning. She addressed the creative ways that she and her colleagues are meeting the challenges of remote learning and stated that the heart of teaching and learning is the same as before.

Board members congratulated and thanked Ms. Vitelli for her work and noted that they were inspired and energized by her passion and enthusiasm.

#### **IV. Charter Schools**

##### **A. Charter School Update**

Mr. Travers, Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE, and Dr. Chuck Longfellow, Associate Secretary, Operations Support, DDOE, provided an update on the work underway in the Charter School Office. Mr. Travers provided information on the enrollment at several charter schools. Board members requested a report in July on the enrollment at Gateway Charter School and an update on leasing or purchasing a building. Board members asked what percentage of eighth graders are enrolling in ninth grade at Las Americas APSPIRA Academy and requested a follow-up report on that number in July. Board members asked about which strategies have led to successful enrollment at Sussex Montessori and increased enrollment at Academy of Dover.

Mr. Travers and Dr. Longfellow presented an update on the progress of Odyssey Charter School in meeting its conditions of formal review. Dr. Longfellow shared that there is a plan in place for repayment of state funds that will be completed on or before the end of the current fiscal year. Board members asked about the audit results, for clarification of the definition and uses of state public funds, and how DDOE will clarify the definition of state funds with schools going forward.

##### **B. Charter School Financial Framework**

Mr. Ted Molin, Vice President and Senior Municipal Credit Analyst at Wilmington Trust, and member of the Charter School Financial Framework Committee joined Mr. Travers and Dr. Longfellow in providing an update on the work toward identifying areas of strength and weakness and drafting recommendations of proposed changes to the Financial Framework. Mr. Molin addressed the metric for student retention and the cash-on-hand liquidity measures. Board members inquired about the indicator of re-enrollment as an appropriate measure for all charter schools, the timeframe for implementation, and a contingency plan of budget item reduction if needed. Board members discussed the importance of quality and stable leadership and noted that this may be considered in future revisions of the governance framework. The Charter School Office will finalize next steps and bring forward to the Board for approval at a future meeting.

#### **V. Regulations**

##### **A. Updates on Regulatory Process**

Ms. Ahner reported that a plan is being finalized to review and clarify the process for bringing forward DDOE, PSB, and Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA) regulations to the State Board of Education. She shared that the intention is to invite content experts to State Board meetings during the month that the regulation is posted for publication to allow more time for in-depth discussion and to answer questions.

##### **B. Professional Standards Board Regulations for Discussion or Action**

###### **1. Regulation 1571 – Special Education Teacher of Students with Disabilities**

Dr. Bradshaw provided information on the proposed changes to this regulation and the public comment received.

A motion was made by Dr. Noble and seconded by Mr. Lofink to approve Regulation 1571 – Special Education Teacher of Students with Disabilities as presented. The motion carried (6 Yes to 0 No - Yes: Bunting, Lofink, Noble, Powell, Rushdan, and Sweeney).

## 2. Regulation 1572 – Teacher of Students Who Are Gifted or Talented

Dr. Bradshaw reviewed information about this regulation. Board members asked if the language in section 3.2 would reflect the same language as in Regulation 1571 for consistency and inquired about the process for answering questions in the Impact Criteria section of the regulation.

### C. Public Comment on Regulations

No public comment was received.

## VI. State Board Business

### A. Committee and Meeting Reports

Ms. Sweeney reported on the work of the Charter School Financial Framework. Dr. Noble participated in the Delaware School Boards Association Board of Directors meeting, met with the DDOE Director of Student Assessment, Theresa Bennett, regarding state testing and diagnostic measures to consider when school resumes, attended the National Association of State Boards of Education Board of Directors meeting, and participated in the Southern Regional Education Board K-12 Recovery task Force meetings. Mr. Lofink attended the Redding Consortium meeting, the beginning of the Return To School meeting, and has followed the recent decision of Judge Laster on property tax assessments. Rev. Powell joined the Vision Coalition of Delaware quarterly leadership meeting, participated in the webinar “Voices from the Field”, will serve on the Re-Opening Schools Health and Wellness work group, and attended a City of Wilmington Town Hall meeting. Ms. Olatunji participated in the YMCA Youth in Government activities.

### B. Executive Director’s Report

Ms. Ahner highlighted gathering and providing information about local, state, and national educational response strategies for COVID-19, participating in DIAA meetings regarding the impact on school sports due to COVID-19, coordinating with the PSB Executive Director to track upcoming regulations, reporting a brief update on the Redding Consortium, and working on the financial closeout of FY20 and startup of FY21.

### C. FY21 Regular Meeting Calendar

A motion was made by Rev. Powell and seconded by Mr. Lofink to approve the FY21 Regular Meeting Calendar as presented. The motion carried (6 Yes to 0 No - Yes: Bunting, Lofink, Noble, Powell, Rushdan, and Sweeney).

## **VII. Formal Public Comment**

No public comment was received.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by Rev. Powell and seconded by Mr. Rushdan. The motion carried (6 Yes to 0 No – Yes: Bunting, Lofink, Noble, Powell, Rushdan, and Sweeney).

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

*Digital recordings of the meeting can be found in the “audio recordings” section of the State Board of Education’s website.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan S. Bunting, Ed.D.  
Executive Secretary and Secretary of Education